

REGULAR MEETING OF THE JASPER COUNTY COUNCIL

May 19, 2015

The Jasper County Council met this date at 7:00 P.M. C.S.T. in the Commissioners' Room, Suite 202, of the Jasper County Courthouse located at 115 West Washington Street, Rensselaer, Indiana, with the following members present: Rein O. Bontreger, Gerrit H. DeVries, John T. Price, Stephen R. Jordan, Andrew Andree, Gary Fritts and Paul Norwine. Also present was Donna Horner, Deputy Auditor, and Linda Armstrong, Deputy Auditor. Mr. Bontreger called the meeting to order and those present stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance led by Mr. Andree.

MINUTES: Mr. DeVries made the motion to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting held on April 22, 2015. Mr. Fritts seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

CORONER / PART-TIME EMPLOYEE: Andy Boersma, Coroner, stated that the Sheriff has a part-time employee at the North Annex building that currently works Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 12 noon till 5 P.M. Upon speaking with the Commissioners, Mr. Boersma was given approval to hire the same employee for an additional 14 hours per week. The employee would essentially work five hours per day on Tuesdays and Thursdays for the Coroner's office. The remaining four hours per week would be used for such things as training and Deputy Coroner duties. Mr. Boersma reported that there were 27 coroner's cases last year at this time. We are already at 39 this year. In order to finish the year with the new employee, an additional appropriation of \$5,642.00 will be needed. Next year, if this is approved, a new line item will be added to the coroner's budget for an "Administrative Assistant / Deputy Coroner" with a request of \$9,464.00 for the year. The new employee has already been sworn in as a Deputy Coroner.

AGRICULTURAL LAND / TAX INCREASE: Mr. Price expressed concern with the 23% tax increase on agricultural land. Many taxpayers were not happy when they saw this increase. Mr. Price would like to put out a reminder that this rate is set by the State. The County has nothing to do with it at all. The legislature has been saying for years that they are going to fix the issue. The problem is that there is a two year delay so our farmers are being taxed now on what the income would have been when corn was approximately \$8.00 per bushel rather than now when it is approximately \$2.00 per bushel.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE BOARD: Mr. Bontreger reported that he spoke with the possible candidate from last month's meeting; however, they have since chosen to not take the appointment. Paul Norwine submitted Ron Klauer as a possible appointment. Discussion took place in regards to requirements of the Board. The appointment will be further addressed at the June meeting.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT / ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION REQUEST: Kevin Kelly, Economic Development Director, stated that the Council approved six (6) months of payments to the South Shore Convention and Visitors Authority within the Innkeeper's Tax Fund's 2015 budget. Those funds will run out on June 30. The Tourism Commission will not be able to pay South Shore unless the Council acts to approve an additional appropriation of \$15,000.00 to finish the year. Mr. Kelly stated that, from his standpoint, they are providing a valuable service that we need; therefore, I am advocating and recommending that we continue the contract through the end of the year. In the 2016 budget process, we are laying the groundwork to be able to cut the contract back which would allow us to keep more money locally. Mr. Kelly also reported that \$15,000.00 went to the Jasper County Fair to be used towards "big name" entertainment.

There being no further business, Mr. Price made the motion to adjourn. Mr. Andree seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Rein O. Bontreger, President

ATTEST:

Kimberly K. Grow, Auditor of Jasper County

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